

The GIRL and the GAME

A Story of Mountain Railroad Life
By FRANK H. SPEARMAN

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SYNOPSIS.

Little Helen Holmes, daughter of General Holmes, railroad man, is rescued from imminent danger on a scenic railroad by George Storm, a newboy. Grown to young womanhood Helen saves Storm, now a thug, her father, and his friends Amos Rhinelander, financier, and Robert Seagrue, promoter, from a threatened collision. Safebreakers employed by Seagrue steal General Holmes' survey plans of the cut-off line for the Tidewater, fatally wound the general and escape. Her father's estate is involved by his death. Helen goes to work on the Tidewater. Seagrue uses Spike to set fire to a powder train loaded by Storm's engine. Helen saves Storm from a horrible death. Helen recovers the survey plans from Seagrue, and though they are taken from her, finds an accidentally made proof of the survey blue print. Storm, employed by Rhinelander, wins a fight with Seagrue's men for possession of a consignment of railroad ties.

SIXTH INSTALLMENT HELEN'S WILD RIDE

Helen spied him the minute she stepped inside Rhinelander's but to deliver the telegram—a small, fluffy bundle of black and white, lying curled up tightly on Rhinelander's cot, as if this was the haven of warmth and refuge so long sought. "Where," demanded Helen of Rhinelander, and emphasizing each word in amazement, "did you get that dear, little dog?"

"That dear, little dog," explained Rhinelander, with corresponding emphasis, "is the last addition to my already overburdened pay roll."

"What's his name? Who," demanded Helen in delight, "put him on?"

"He just got hold with his teeth and hung on. He blew into camp the other day, the tidiest, ornariest, hungriest-looking cur you ever saw. Some motoring party lost him, probably."

Rhinelander reread his telegram: Rhinelander,

Signal:

Monthly pay roll on No. 4.

"Say, this is news; best I've had this week. The pay roll is overdue three days and these Greeks and Mexicans are a suspicious bunch. What's your hurry?" he asked as Helen made ready to go.

"I must run," said Helen. "I'm alone this morning."

"Don't be in a rush; I'm going over that way myself," returned Rhinelander, picking up his hat. "The pup will keep house a few minutes."

Leaving the hut door open, Rhinelander, accompanied by Helen, started for the station. Two good comrades, as well as devoted friends, Helen and he laughed and joked along their way,



"Thieves Took the Pay Roll. They Are on This Train!"

watched from the farther end of the camp by Spike, who, disgraced, chafed, half in hiding, awaiting some opportunity for mischief to turn up—something that would release from honest idleness.

It was to be an irony of fate that now made of the homeless dog an instrument to serve the purpose of the restless criminal. The puppy, alone, in the tent, refreshed by his nap, invigorated by his breakfast, and impelled, Rhinelander would have said, by the devil, looked about for something to interest him. Seizing the telegram in his sharp teeth, he started off to tear it to pieces. At that juncture an inquisitive squirrel, pausing before the open door, peered sharply into the hut.

To the dog, this looked like a formal challenge. He was so overcome by the impudence of it that he sprang from the table, forgetting to put the telegram back where it belonged. Away he dashed, telegram in teeth, after the squirrel.

There was but a single spectator of this dash—the brooding Spike. As the dog tore past Spike the telegram

NOVELIZED FROM THE MOVING PICTURE PLAY OF THE SAME NAME. PRODUCED BY THE SIGNAL FILM CORPORATION. COPYRIGHT, 1915, BY FRANK H. SPEARMAN.

dropped from his mouth almost at the convict's feet, and idly picking the paper up Spike opened and read it:

Signal:

Monthly pay roll on No. 4.

Brief though the message was, it contained enough news to arouse Spike.

Casting only a glance in the direction of the fleeing dog, Spike, clutching his find, hurried toward Seagrue's camp and lost no time in covertly showing him the message, without explaining how it had fallen into his hands.

Seagrue, reading the telegram, saw the moment he looked at Spike, what was in the convict's mind.

Seagrue studied the message. "It wouldn't be a bad idea to get hold of the stuff a while, anyway," he mused. "It's behind time now, I understand; and I hear the men over there are getting restless about not getting their money. If you could hold it up on Rhinelander a few days you might work up a strike."

"How far do you want to go with this thing?" demanded Spike, casting a vicious eye on his employer.

"I don't care how far you go," said Seagrue, "provided you hold up that pay roll."

Spike left the camp. No more than a moment's reflection was needed to suggest an idea to him. Returning to the station, he got a long distance telephone wire and called up two of his friends at Oceanside—Sykes, a convict acquaintance, and a chum of Sykes, who, in various encounters with the law, had lost all of his name but "Dan."

In jargon Spike explained to Sykes, who answered the telephone, the possibilities of a haul at Signal. Dan, standing near Sykes in the room they occupied together, asked questions and prompted his companion, who tried to get from Spike—reluctant to talk much on the wire—a description of the lay of the land. Spike blurted out the end to the story and take the job or leave it, as they liked. However, the two criminals got enough from him to decide that a third man was indicated, and they called into their conference a crooked safe expert, known only by his nickname of "Bat, the Bat." To him they confided their plot. Nothing loath, Bat consented to join in the enterprise, and following Spike's hints, the trio made arrangements to leave for Signal on the train that should carry Rhinelander's pay roll.

When No. 4 pulled into Signal next morning three men dropped off the hind end. They made up the criminal gang that Spike had engaged to rob Rhinelander, and, knowing the loot was expected on the train that carried them, two of the men kept the front end of the train well in view until they had watched Lyons and Helen take the package of money from the express messenger, and after receiving for it, walk with Rhinelander into the station. Inside of the office Rhinelander examined the shipment of currency.

"I have no safe at the camp, Lyons," explained Rhinelander, when the agent asked him to receipt for the package. "Keep it here for me in your safe until tomorrow." He pushed the open package of bills back through the wicket of the counter, but in doing this he accidentally overturned a bottle of ink.

Helen screamed a little, and jumping aside, caught up a piece of cloth from the letter-press stand, wiped the ink off the bills as best she could and turned them over to Lyons, who took the big package within his charge and placed it carefully in the safe. Not, however, without having been observed by two of the Oceanside criminals who were loitering just then outside the office window.

Turning away before they were discovered, these men—Sykes and Dan—were joined by the third member of their expedition, and the three headed for Rhinelander's camp to hunt up Spike.

They encountered him on the way over to the station to look for them. A consultation was held in the woods. The four were now assured that the money had come, and they knew where it had been put. To the safe expert was left the details, and when these had been arranged to suit him, the quartet scattered. That evening they might have been seen hovering around the station about the time that Helen and Lyons were closing up for the night. Indeed, the latter had hardly locked the station door before Spike, watching his opportunity, signaled his assistants to the freighthouse window. This, without ceremony, they broke open and entering the telegraph office from the freightroom, took possession of the premises.

The man known as The Bat, the master mind of the visiting trio, at once got down in front of the safe for

an examination. It took him only a moment to examine and tabulate in his mind the kind of safe he had to do with. In another moment he threw back the bolts and swung the door open.

They took the pay roll package out just as Lyons had placed it within the safe. But the easy triumph of the expert and the congratulations of his friends did not seem enough to satisfy him. To make the job artistic, he directed his assistants to get together some brown paper, and after they had taken the bills from the package, he filled it with waste paper, rewrapped the package carefully and replaced it just as he had found it in the safe.

Leaving by the same way they had entered, the quartet took their way to Seagrue's camp. Seagrue was asleep, and Spike woke him and muttered they had the money. Seagrue, somewhat upset by the size of the company of thieves with which he was now tied up, kept his own counsel. He listened to all that Spike had to say, and at once advised sending the three safe-blowers back to the city. This, however, it was decided, after a brief conference, would not do, as Spike needed somebody to help him foment a disturbance next day. In the end, a compromise was effected, by which The Bat was sent to town while Sykes and Dan were kept over night to aid in stirring up Rhinelander's men.

The following day had already been announced in Rhinelander's camp as pay day. When Helen and Lyons arrived at the office in the morning for duty they found Rhinelander waiting to take the money. Lyons, very willing to be rid of his responsibility, opened the safe and unexpectingly turned over to Rhinelander the package he had placed in it the afternoon before.

When the construction boss reached



Spike Piled the Grumbling Laborers With Liquor.

his camp, the men were lined up outside his tent waiting for their pay. Passing within, Rhinelander cut open the package. To his consternation he found only brown paper instead of currency. Stunned by the revelation and breathless with amazement, he made his way, white-faced, back to the station for an explanation.

Rushing into the office he threw the doctored package down before Lyons and Helen. The two paled in turn with excitement and each of the three looked blankly into the faces of the others. Lyons ran to the safe and opened it again—Rhinelander and Helen watching. Nowhere else inside was any money to be found. The currency package, apparently undisturbed, had been taken by the agent in the first instance from precisely where he had left it and seemingly in the same condition in which it had been placed in the safe. All that confronted the startled trio now was the worthless package of brown paper.

Rhinelander wiped his brow and turned, dejected, from the counter. He had not the heart to wire Oceanside of the calamity. The first thing necessary, in any event, was to make an effort to appease the men and, starting to his camp, he attempted to do this. The men, made uneasy by Rhinelander's sudden disappearance after his promise to pay, were grumbling around Wood, the foreman, who was using his best efforts to quiet them. Rhinelander now reappeared from the station, but empty-handed. He brought with him the rifled package, showed it to Wood and to the men; explained that he had been robbed and told the men they would have to wait.

Those closest in the group that crowded around him had been primed for a disturbance by Spike and his two confederates. They sneered at Rhinelander's statements and told him they wanted their pay. Lyons, hurrying over from the station, reported to Rhinelander that the express company and the chief special agent's office had been notified of the robbery and detectives were on the way. But while Wood and Lyons argued with some of the disaffected, Spike and his companions lured others of them to a hut on the edge of the camp limits, where a sort of blind pig was in operation. Here Spike, spending money freely, plied the grumbling laborers with liquor and advised them to stand on their rights and refuse to work if their money was not at once forthcoming.

Rhinelander made up his mind not

to dodge the issue and he assured each of the men as would listen that if they would give him a little time he would replace the pay roll on his personal credit; and that no one should lose a cent through the accident. The difficulty was to get the men to listen. The strike idea spread through the camp like an infection, and reason was for the moment completely forgotten. Spike, perceiving the mischief well under way and anxious to get the two city criminals out of the way before the detectives from headquarters should arrive and round up the camp for suspects, directed Spike and Dan to "beat it" back to town on the local passenger.

At this time a sudden and unexpected complication arose. With Spike, the party returned to the shack for a final drink, and when they left it, Sykes and Dan started for the station. But a lighted match carelessly thrown to the ground inside the hut, falling among rubbish, had ignited it, and almost before the pair reached the station the hut was on fire.

Entering the waiting room with his companion, Sykes bought tickets from Helen for the city. When with Dan he walked out on the platform, the local train had pulled in and the crew were looking at the fire in Rhinelander's camp.

Sykes and Dan boarded the train at the moment it pulled slowly out. In the office, while Helen was putting away the bill with which Sykes had paid for the tickets, her attention was attracted by a blot of ink on the edge of it. With a woman's intuition, she realized almost at once that the ink-stained bill was one of those stolen from the express package the night before. Running out on the platform, she told Lyons of the discovery.

Helen, frantic as she saw the train pulling away with the burglars, looked around for help. Nothing seemed to

ROYAL Theatre

Tuesday
Mar. 21th

CHAPTER VI.

—OF—

"The Girl and the Game"

Featuring

Fearless

Helen
Holmes

Coming Monday
March 20

Manhattan
Musical
Merry Makers

New Shows, New Scenery,
New Effects.

the package. They are both on this train!" she cried. "They have the money. We must get them or he'll be ruined, if he isn't ruined by this terrible fire. You must help me, conductor, both of you."

Followed by the brakeman, the two walked forward. It was rather a long train.

The conductor could not be hurried, and the search went all too slowly for Helen, who feared what did, in fact, presently occur. Sykes and Dan, uneasy in the fear of special agents on their trail, were on the alert. They sat near the front door of the smoker, and as Helen and the conductor began at the rear end of the car to look over the passengers, Sykes, spying Helen, quietly slid through the front door—to the platform. Dan following. They sat down on the steps looking for a good place to jump off. While the conductor was walking forward, with Sykes casting furtive glances at him through the front window, the train drew near the San Pablo river. "I'm off here," growled Sykes to his confederate, briefly.

Dan protested; a jump was not to his taste, but Sykes, the big fellow, did not hesitate. The train was crossing the San Pablo. Sykes leaped from the step into the river. Dan reluctantly following suit.

Helen, through an open window of the smoker, saw Sykes' jump. She caught the conductor's arm and begged him to stop the train. He pulled the cord and, with the conductor and brakeman after her, Helen ran to the front platform. The train slowed. In the river, Sykes and Dan were swimming. Helen made ready to drop off. The conductor and brakeman tried to dissuade her; they could not.

"You'll have to go alone, I can't leave this train," shouted the conductor to her.

Helen only waved her hand as she dropped to the ground.

Luckily, she had not been seen by the men she was after, but a further obstacle threatened. The convicts had swum to the nearest bank and were now across the river from Helen. A passing boat was awaiting the draw, and the moment the train passed the jackknife had been started up by the bridge tender. Helen was running to get to the other side before it was too late. Sykes and Dan, ashore, were hurrying away, and the ponderous jackknife was rising under Helen's feeble feet. The draw span, already high in the air, made a widening gap between her and the abutment, but Helen, running to the rising end, jumped from it recklessly to the abutment below. She landed, bruised, on the track, but she picked herself up and sped on after the fugitives.

The river bridge is at no great distance from Oceanside, but Helen's breath was pretty well exhausted before Sykes and Dan reached a suburban street car and boarded it. So close was she after them that she gained one platform just as the two men stepped up on the other. Concealing herself behind a seat, Helen hid in terror, but with all their astuteness the criminals failed to discover her. When the two left the car in the city, Helen was again relentlessly on their heels. Following them vigilantly she intercepted an officer, told him of her chase, and he instantly joined her in the pursuit of the men, now disappearing in the distance.

Turning into an obscure street, the criminals entered a doorway and started up a long flight of stairs. Helen with her policeman hard behind. Looking back from the first landing, the convicts now saw their pursuers. Springing up a second flight of stairs, they knocked hurriedly at the first door. It was opened by their confederate, The Bat, who, inside the room, had been diverting himself by counting the stolen money.

"They're after us," exclaimed Sykes to him. "We've got to get out of here. Beat it, Bat. The girl and the cop are on the stairs."

"Make for the roof," cried The Bat. The hard-pressed pair ran for the trap ladder. The Bat, keeping to his room, slammed the door shut. Once through the trap door, which Sykes and Dan dropped behind them, and on the roof, the pair imagined themselves safe, but Helen and her officer were close behind, and when they found the trap door closed against them the officer drew his revolver and fired up through it.

On the outside, Sykes and Dan jumped back like rabbits from the shots. Helen and her helper threw open the trap unopposed, and, gaining the roof, faced the convicts. No where could the robbers find an avenue of escape on the top of the building, and cornered like rats as Helen and the policeman reached them, they put up a hand-to-hand fight.

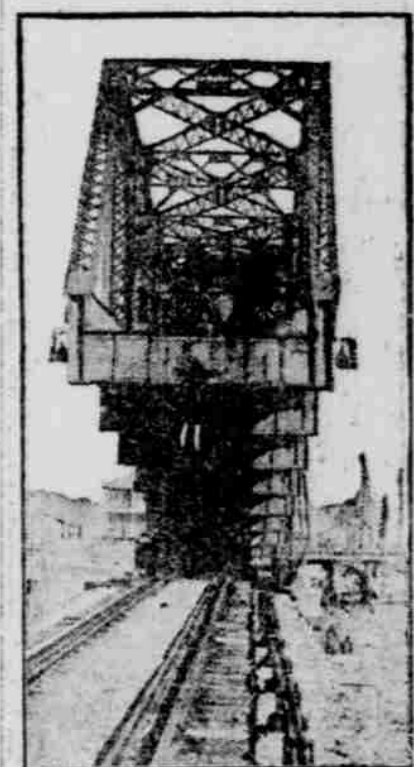
The officer tackled Sykes, the more powerful of the pair, and Dan, seeing his opportunity for a flank movement, tried to regain the trap door. Helen pounced on him like a panther. He tried to throw her off. Despite his blows and struggles, he could not get rid of his tenacious assailant, and locked in a life-and-death struggle, they fought, reckless of consequence, nearer and nearer to the edge of the roof. For a moment both their lives were in peril, but Helen, her fighting blood up, would have clung to her prisoner if it had cost her life.

Provisionally, the harried man, fast losing his nerve under her frantic attack, and pushing to the edge of the parapet in the wild assault, flung Helen violently off in an effort to throw her over the roof parapet to her death. In his terrific effort he lost his balance. With a scream he tried to recover his foothold. Helen, seeing his desperate plight, would

have caught him to save his life, but fortunately for herself, she could not reach him in time. Had she done so, her own death would have been inevitable, for Dan, swaying wildly, slipped again. He caught with a fearful curse at the empty air. It was too late for anyone to aid him now, and the next instant he had plunged headlong off the roof to his death.

Helen turned to the officer, who, in a grapple with Sykes, was fighting in the grasp of the powerful criminal, to save himself from being hurled through an adjoining skylight.

Below the two, the fat man, Bat, looking up, beheld his confederate in the grip of the law. Helen was too late to aid the officer to save himself, but the plucky policeman gripped Sykes around the neck as he plunged forward himself, and before the fat



Helen Jumped From It Recklessly.

man in the room, watching apprehensively, could draw a full breath, the two men crashed violently through the skylight together almost on top of him. As it was, they landed in a heap on the bed. The Bat sprang at once on the helpless policeman. It would have gone hard with him but for instant aid from Helen. She dropped down the open skylight, caught the revolver from the officer's hand and held the two criminals at the point of it until the policeman could slip handcuffs on them. When the two men were secured, Helen demanded the stolen money.

The man Bat did most of the talking.

"I don't know what you are talking about," he said jovially, while Helen's accusations were launched at him. "I am a piano tuner, officer. I don't know this man," he pointed calmly at Sykes. "I never saw him in my life till he smashed my skylight. What do you mean, anyway, by breaking into my room? I'll put the blue-sky laws on you. Who's going to pay for all this glass?" he demanded with an injured air. "The landlord is going to come after me for it. I'll have your whole bunch arrested the minute I get to the police station. I don't know anything about your money. I don't believe you've got any money or have had any."

"What did you attack the policeman for as soon as he dropped into the room?" cried Helen, indignantly.

"Why, miss, I am near-sighted. I thought that man was a piano tuner when I saw him—a man that's tried to let the light into me two or three times with a gun—it's a fact!"

The officer shut off The Bat's talk, and Helen, with the astuteness of a detective, searched him, with the result that from his various pockets she recovered every package of the bills stolen from the safe, and nearly all of them intact.

The fat man lost none of his nerve when confronted with the result. He declared he had been made the victim of a plot, that his character and reputation were known everywhere in the city—which was quite true. And having denounced all unwarranted intrusions such as he had been made the victim of, he resigned himself to go as prisoner with a much better grace than his sullen companion did. They were taken together to the police station.

Helen telephoned immediately for a motor car, and, accompanied by her friendly officer, and with the money stowed away on her person, she stepped into the car and ordered it driven in haste to Signal. Fast as the landscape flew by it did not keep pace with Helen's impetuosity. They drew in sight of Rhinelander's camp. Smoke still rose from where the fire had threatened its complete destruction. Rhinelander and Wood, with their men, had finally extinguished the conflagration, though not until a heavy toll of damage had been taken by the flames. Helen caught sight of Rhinelander just as the car raced up to the camp and alighting, called him joyfully to her, waving the money in her great excitement, in her hands.

"It's here," she cried. "Most every bit of it."

"What do you mean?"

"The pay roll! We've got it—all of it—the money stolen from the safe. It is here in this package." Rhinelander, half-dazed, could hardly ask explanations. He bit his lips and told the story. Her father uncle caught her in his arms, money and all. Together—the men gawking around—they walked with the recovered treasure through the back garden camp.

(TO BE CONTINUED)